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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to intervene and assist borderline elementary school RSP (Resource Specialist Program) students in special education classes and/or through extra assistance within the regular classroom. Borderline RSP students who had been referred to the Student Study Team (SST) for below-grade-level scores and classroom functioning in reading and related subject areas were placed in the RSP pull-out program. The 11 students worked in an elementary school RSP classroom 3 days a week for 3 months to improve their phonetic skills and other areas of language arts. One day for a week for 3 months, the resource specialist and her aide presented enrichment lessons coupled with cooperative learning activities to school-based RSP students and regular classroom students. Practicum results were positive. Students' attitudes about reading, school, and related subjects after the intervention were generally positive. Most of these students were able to receive a passing score by decoding words. The combination of RSP services to remediate decoding skills and other weak areas in language arts, as well as the cooperative learning experiences in the regular classroom, helped to improve the school-based borderline RSP students' attitudes about school and reading. Findings provide support for the use of school-based provision for borderline RSP students' early enrollment in the program. Seven tables and one figure are included; special education terms and abbreviations, forms related to the program, a decoding word list work sample, and a questionnaire are attached. Contains 41 references. (Author/RS)

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ED 367 961

Improving Attitudes and Reading Skills of Prospective RSP Students by Using Direct Instruction and Cooperative Learning Techniques in Regular and RSP Classrooms

by

Donna Mieux

Cluster 39

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

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ABSTRACT

Improving Attitudes and Reading Skills of Prospective RSP Students by Using Direct Instruction and Cooperative Learning Techniques in Regular and RSP Classrooms. Mieux, Donna, 1992. Practicum I Report, Nova University, ED.D. Early and Middle Childhood Program. Descriptors: At-Risk Student/Attitude Change/RSP Student/ Collaboration/ Cooperative Learning/ Decoding Skills for Reading/Direct Instruction/ Educational Methods/Elementary Education/ Elementary Reading Instruction/Enrichment Activities/ Exceptional Children's Education/Language Arts Instruction/ Learning Disabilities/ Learning Styles/Mainstreaming/Peer Tutoring/Pull-out Program/Resource Specialist Program/Resource Specialist Role/Special Education

The goal of this practicum was to intervene and assist borderline RSP students in special education classes and/or through extra assistance within the regular classroom. Additionally, the writer was to demonstrate to the administration through surveys and/or questionnaires the value of RSP classes for the borderline RSP student.

Borderline RSP students who had been referred to the Student Study Team (SST) for below grade level scores and classroom functioning in reading and related subject areas were placed in the resource specialist program (RSP), which is a special education pull-out program. School-based borderline RSP students worked in the RSP classroom four days a week for three months to improve their phonetic skills and other areas of language arts. One day a week for three months, the resource specialist and her aide presented enrichment lessons coupled with cooperative learning activities to school-based RSP students and regular classroom students.

The practicum results were positive. By using the Borderline RSP Questionnaire after the practicum intervention, school-based students' attitudes about reading, school, and related subjects were generally positive. Most of these students were able to receive a passing score by decoding words. The criteria used for grading the decoding skills on the Decoding Word List, a work sample sheet, was 15 words decoded correctly out of 20 possible words. The writer contends that the combination of RSP services to remediate decoding skills and other weak areas in language arts, as well as the cooperative learning experiences in the regular classroom, helped to improve the school-based borderline RSP students' attitudes about school and reading. The results documented on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire and the Decoding Word List make a strong case to the administration for the use of the school-based provision for borderline RSP students' early enrollment in the program.

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

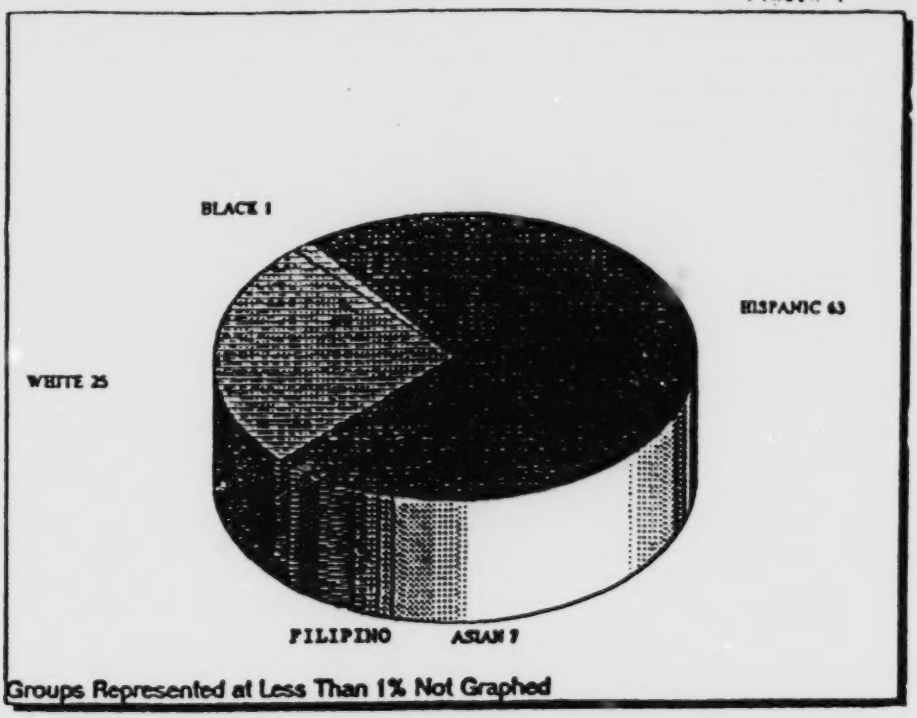
Description of Community

This practicum took place in an elementary school servicing approximately 400 students from kindergarten through fifth grades. The elementary school is one of 40 schools in the district ranging from preschools, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, to adult schools. There are about 22,000 students currently enrolled in the district, excluding the adult school population.

The current population at this school site includes students who walk to the school and those who are bused. Approximately two-thirds of the students are bused. The regular classroom program provides for the needs of all the children. Children with special needs receive additional help through support programs such as Bilingual Education, Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), Resource Specialist Program (RSP), and Head Start. The 1989-90 ethnic make-up of this elementary school is indicated in Figure 1. At this school site there is a rich and diverse student population. Support for the cultural background of each of the students is provided through classroom activities, schoolwide assemblies, field trips, and student

displays (according to the principal's report to the community for the 1989-1990 school year).

Figure 1



Note. Used with permission from A Report to the Community for the 1989-90 School Year by the elementary school principal, 1990.

This generally suburban community is made-up of working class and middle class people. As is shown on the graph, a large part of the community is made up of people having an Hispanic background. The community is about 25 minutes away from a large metropolitan city that is steadily growing.

There has been an effort in the past year to recruit parent, grandparent, business, and local media involvement in this particular elementary school. Four educational assemblies and sponsored field trips for the 500 Club reading incentive winners were provided by the Parent

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Teachers' Association (PTA) (according to the principal's report to the community for the 1989-1990 school year). The PTA, also helped to purchase equipment and materials for the school. Parents have helped to give support for community members who have been involved in the leadership of the school by their involvement on the School Site Council.

The 1989-1990 school program used parents and community resources to support the following activities: Beware of Strangers Program (Women's Club), Anti-Drug Program (Sheriff's Department), Stamp Club (Post Office), and Read to Succeed (members of the district and community).

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer, as a resource specialist, performs the duties of special education teacher of identified learning disabled students, consultant to the regular classroom teachers, member of the leadership team, member of the School Site Committee, recorder and member of the Student Study Team, member of the discipline committee, and coordinator of the Artist of the Month school project.

The writer's Resource Specialist Program (RSP) is primarily a pull-out special education program composed of 28 students. There were 11 school-based RSP students and 17 officially staffed RSP students. The 17 staffed RSP students all had Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) on file and were legally staffed according to PL 94-142

guidelines into RSP. Legally staffed RSP students from any place within the nation are automatically accepted into RSP when transferring to a new public school location. The 11 school-based RSP students were eligible to receive special education services for one year only. Borderline RSP students have many of the same characteristics as staffed RSP students, but have not been referred to and/or been reviewed by the Student Study Team (SST), therefore these students received no special education benefits. The SST determines whether borderline RSP students may receive special education service for one year as a school-based RSP student or until mainstreamed as a staffed RSP student. These three categories; staffed RSP students, school-based RSP students, and borderline RSP students are delineated by the amount of special education service that is legally available.

According to SST guidelines, borderline RSP students who have not been staffed into RSP may benefit from the program for the duration of one year only under school-based provisions. The school-based students are treated no differently than staffed RSP students. Even though school-based RSP students do not have formal IEP's and have not been legally staffed into RSP, these students receive the same instruction, support, and other benefits provided by the program. Staffed RSP students that may enroll at the writer's school site have the legal right to take the place

of a school-based student in the RSP classroom, if the classroom is at maximum legal enrollment, which is 28 RSP students. These school-based students often have the same characteristics as the staffed RSP students and have been referred by their regular classroom teacher as students who need academic and/or behavioral support in addition to or other than what the regular program offers. The school-based student may receive special educaton benefits in the resource specialist program for up to one year's time. (In rare instances a six-month extension in the school-based category has been offered by the coordinator of pupil personnel.) Within the year of placement these students will be given a full battery of tests by the school psychologist and resource specialist, as well as other personnel who may have pertinent data, such as the speech therapist or bilingual specialist.

To enjoy the benefits of RSP and to become a school-based RSP student, the student must be referred to the Student Study Team (SST) for review. The team is composed of the student, parent(s), the referring classroom teacher, two other classroom teachers, and the principal. Often other members of the staff or community may be invited to attend the meeting(s). After at least two SST meetings, a group decision to place the referred student in RSP can be made after careful consideration of preliminary test scores and observations, after various regular educational

modifications have been unsuccessfully attempted, and after physical and medical reasons have been eliminated as causes for the academic and/or behavioral difficulties. Appendix A contains definitions of special education terms and abbreviations.

The purpose of the SST goes beyond screening students for special education programs. Core members of the team and others share their expertise with parents, regular classroom teachers, and others, so that every attempt is given to facilitate a student's success within the regular educational system. Ideas may be generated in the meeting that may lend support to parents and/or school personnel for remediation in one or more academic subject areas. Methods for utilizing effective skills for behavior management of a student may be offered. There may be a need for medical advice and assessment. Examinations given by the school nurse and neurological examinations by a licensed physician may be required. Social services such as counseling, tutoring, financial help, and other necessary community services are often provided to the parents and professionals as additional resources.

Out of 28 students serviced in the resource specialist program, 25 were bused from a near-by city. These students were generally from households that provide a lower income than the students who live within walking distance of the

school site. The school is located in a middle income suburban residential area.

At the school site, the RSP classroom is one of 16 classrooms ranging in grades from preschool to fifth grade. The RSP classroom accommodates Grades 1 through 5. The writer, who is the resource specialist, along with the aide, works with students in small groups of not more than eight students at a time per adult. Students are grouped by functional level and as close to grade level as possible. The IEPs of the staffed RSP students range from service given in all academic areas to remediation with specific learning disabilities.

The resource specialist program functioned mainly as a pull-out program in which each student was scheduled to be seen directly by the resource specialist and/or aide at least four days a week for a particular time period or time periods for the subject and/or subjects that had been indicated on the IEP. The writer and the aide, for one or more days a week, worked within those regular classroom that enrolled staffed RSP students.

Chapter II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem as seen by the writer was that borderline or possible RSP students at the school site on the elementary school level, having many of the same characteristics and learning handicaps as staffed learning disabled students, do not receive adequate special education help and receive very little help within the regular program. It is legal in the writer's state for the resource specialist to work with borderline RSP students under school-based provisions as determined through the School Improvement Program (SIP) and within cooperative learning groups in the regular classrooms. Although the writer's state authorizes classes for staffed RSP children and school-based RSP students, the writer's school district did not encourage the school-based provision. The writer's goal was to demonstrate to the administration the value of RSP classes for the borderline RSP student. (See Appendix B for more complete documentation and explanation about the legalities of the school-based provision.)

Learning disabled children may have one, some, or even all of the characteristics generally attributed to the learning disabled. Each child is different. Borderline RSP

children also may have one, several, or all of the characteristics of a learning-disabled child. This broad range of disabilities makes it difficult for those who work with this population and for researchers who study the learning disabled (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1988).

Hallahan and Kauffman (1988) list a variety of characteristics that may be attributed to the learning disabled child. The following is a list of the most common characteristics:

1. Hyperactivity
2. Perceptual-motor impairments
3. Emotional lability (frequent shifts in emotional mood)
4. General coordination deficits
5. Disorders of attention (short attention span, distractibility, preservation)
6. Impulsivity
7. Disorders of memory and thinking
8. Specific academic problems (reading, arithmetic, writing, and/or spelling)
9. Disorders of speech and hearing
10. Equivocal neurological signs and electroencephalographic (EEG) irregularities (p. 113)

These at-risk students many times are referred to the SST for help in academic and behavioral areas. Because there are many referrals at the writer's school site, the referrals are put in priority order: from the most needy students to the least needy. These students are placed on a list to be reviewed by the SST. The initial identification of a problem is usually made by the regular classroom teacher, who is required to discuss the problem with the resource specialist, principal, and/or the educational

psychologist on site. The literature also supports this method of initial identification of a problem (Ford, Mongon, & Whelan, 1982). Regular classroom teachers often hope that the students they have referred will receive special education. When a student has been referred by his regular classroom teacher to the SST, however, the process of becoming eligible for special education is at times dubious, lengthy, and/or involved.

After the original SST meeting convenes, more information is usually needed in addition to the parent's and the referring classroom teacher's input. Information from further observations at home, observations of the student on the school playground and in the classroom, or a complete physical examination, and tests given by the speech and language therapist may be necessary. Other assessment may be needed before decisions can be rendered about the educational program for a student that is having various difficulties. A time period is decided upon by the SST for all assessment to be completed and for the second SST to be scheduled. At this second meeting the assessment results are studied and discussed among the SST members. A decision is usually then made about what procedure is needed to best help the student's behavioral and/or academic development.

If the student appears to warrant special educational services, the proper forms need to be signed for further

assessment. This additional assessment is administered by the resource specialist or special education teacher and the school psychologist. When this assessment has been completed, also within a scheduled time-line, an initial IEP meeting will be scheduled.

At the initial IEP meeting, it is determined whether the student qualifies for admittance into a special education program. The team then must agree on the specific special education program that would best benefit the student who has qualified for special education instruction. The various programs for special education in the district are: Resource Specialist Program, Special Day Class for the Learning Disabled, Severe Language Disorder, Severely Handicapped, and Orthopedically Handicapped. When the type of classroom program setting has been determined, the IEP is written for a maximum time period of one year. The IEP may be reviewed or rewritten if necessary, at any time before the annual goal time period has been reached.

The parent(s) are then requested to sign a form indicating that they were present at the IEP meeting and that they agree or disagree with the IEP as stated on the form. The parents receive a copy of all forms needed and signed at the meeting, including the IEP form. The special education district office receives copies of the forms and the third set is placed in the student's cumulative record file. The special education instructor usually must make a

copy of the forms to be kept in the classroom team file. The student is then an official special education student, able to enjoy the legal rights and benefits of this program.

Students may be released from special education by being completely mainstreamed into the regular program when they have reached near grade level in a particular academic area or when their behavior is classroom appropriate as determined by the special education teacher. The parent(s) at any time may ask for the release of their child from the special education program, back into the full-time regular education program.

The process of admittance into special education is riveted with legalities and time constraints. Even if a student is qualified for special education, to receive any special education support, the wait to be processed may be a year or more depending on many factors, such as personnel availability. Needy students in the meantime, become further behind fellow classmates.

When a student is borderline RSP, that is, does not or has not qualified for special education but is considered at-risk or needy by professional personnel at school, he or she remains in the regular classroom structure receiving no extra help or benefits.

Underachievement is a characteristic of the borderline RSP student. Broadly, underachievement is defined by Butler-Por (1987) as a large discrepancy between a student's

performance in school and the student's true ability as observed by teachers and parents. A student does not qualify for the resource specialist program solely by his or her underachievement.

A student qualifies for the resource specialist program or special day class program for the learning disabled by obtaining the difference of at least a 1.5 standard deviation between the scores on a standardized achievement test and a test of intellectual ability (school district used with permission from the procedural guide). The student must also have a specific learning disability, as determined by a formal test usually administered by the school psychologist. State Law further requires that the evidenced discrepancy be directly related to a processing disorder (school district, procedural guide). The school district's Procedural Guide states that as a part of the multidisciplinary assessment, psychological processing disorder(s) must be identified before special education consideration is possible. The areas that psychological processing disorders may be identified in are: attention, visual processing, auditory processing, sensory-motor skills, and/or cognitive abilities, including association, conceptualization, and expression. The IEP team should establish the relationship of the results to the pupil's academic performance.

If a student does not show specific perceptual

disabilities as shown on a formal test or tests, he is then rejected from possible special education placement. If there is not a large enough discrepancy between the student's academic functioning and his intelligence score as indicated on a standardized intelligence test, such as the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale or the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, the student is then excluded from special education possibilities.

Evidence that these borderline RSP students do need academic and/or behavioral help, regardless of current intelligence test scores, is supported by home and school observations, interviews, student work, teacher referrals to the SST, teacher referrals to special education programs, the cumulative records, report cards, and test scores. The voice of experienced teachers who can best see the comparison and contrast between those students who are functioning at grade level and those who are grossly lagging behind their classmates is ignored. If the referred student does not show a perceptual problem or a large enough difference between functional level and intelligence level as measured by one of various standardized tests the school psychologist chooses to use, that student receives what little help can be obtained in the regular classroom structure.

Parents are sometimes at a loss about what to do for their child if he or she is not functioning at grade level

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or his/her behavior is not classroom appropriate. Regular classroom teachers are burdened with excessively large class loads and often find it difficult to individualize work for the needy student or to even find time to give advice to the parent that seeks the help. In the meantime, the student that is needy but does not qualify for any assistance remains in the regular classroom without the necessary help, no matter how much evidence, or how many professionals recognize the dilemma.

The problem confronted in this practicum was that borderline RSP students in the writer's elementary school, having many of the same characteristics and learning handicaps as staffed learning disabled students, did not receive special education help and received very little help within the regular program. Although State law provides for the resource teacher to work with staffed and school-based borderline RSP students, the writer's school district did not encourage the school-based provision. If the RSP student is not officially staffed into special education, money is not provided by the State for the student. Money from the State is not provided for the school-based and/or borderline RSP student. The three catergories of students discussed in this practicum are; borderline RSP students, receiving no legal special education service, school-based RSP students, receiving the same special education service and support as staffed RSP students for up to one year's

time, and staffed RSP students, receiving special education service for as long as needed.

Problem Documentation

During the 1989-1990 school year, from September to June, 16 students were referred by their regular classroom teachers to the SST at their school site, for significant problems in academic work or deportment in school. Of the 16 students referred to the SST, 11 of these students received special education services and were placed as school-based RSP students. These students may also be referred to as borderline RSP students before receiving special education services, possible RSP students, at-risk, and needy students. In order to be placed as a school-based RSP student, these students must be possible future official RSP students, that is, having many of the same characteristics as staffed RSP students, without having been given the full battery of perceptual, academic, and intelligence tests.

Before and after the initial SST meeting of the 11 RSP school-based students, work samples from the regular classroom teachers showed academic deficits for all 11 students in reading and/or language arts. The writer collected work samples from each of the 11 school-based students which also verified difficulties all 11 students had in reading and/or language arts. All 11 school-based

students, at their respective grade levels scored below passing on decoding skills indicated on the work samples.

Table 1 shows the below passing scores of all school-based students on decoding skills as determined by work sample results. The scores indicated that a problem existed and there was a need for these students to receive extra assistance with decoding or phonetic skills in reading. None of the students received the minimum passing score of 15 on the test. The same oral test was given to third, fourth, and fifth grade students. The third grade students were requested to pronounce initial and final sounds in the words that were presented. The fourth and fifth graders were requested to read the entire word correctly (see Appendix C for a sample of the teacher made test used.)

Table 1

Borderline BSP Student Sample Results
(Before Practicum Intervention)

	Sex of Student	Grade	Initial and Ending Sounds Pronounced (3rd grade) Correct Responses	Entire Word Decoded Aloud (4th & 5th Grade Correct Responses
1	Male	3	6	
2	Male	3	6	
3	Male	3	7	
4	Male	4		8
5	Female	4		5
6	Female	5		10
7	Male	5		9
8	Female	5		13
9	Male	5		7
10	Female	5		8
11	Male	5		9

*Minimum passing score for third, fourth, and fifth graders is 15 correct answers out of 20 possible items.

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The writer used the Borderline RSP Questionnaire (see Appendix D) to interview each of the 11 students under the school-based provision, and all of the students indicated that they needed extra help in certain subject areas. Item 3 on the questionnaire is: I need more help with these subjects. The students indicated which subject or subjects in which they felt more help was necessary. Item 19 on the questionnaire is: I do or do not like school and why. Negative attitudes about school in general or about a particular school subject, usually reading, were indicated by 10 of the 11 students on the questionnaire.

Table 2 shows the results of the Borderline RSP Questionnaire in terms of students' attitudes about school in general and about what they consider to be their weak subject. An analysis of the Borderline RSP Questionnaire indicated that borderline RSP students' attitudes about school in general and about reading as a weak subject were generally negative and the need for more positive attitudes about school and reading needed to be fostered. If borderline RSP students were able to internalize positive attitudes about school and reading, school would then become a more successful and enjoyable institution for these students to attend.

Table 2

Subject and School Attitudes of Borderline Students on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire (Before Practicum Intervention)

	Sex of Student	Grade	Attitude about School in General			Student Perceptions of weak subject(s)
			Negative	Unsure	Positive	
1	Male	3	X			Reading/spelling
2	Male	3	X			Reading/writing
3	Male	3	X			Reading/spelling
4	Male	4	X			Reading/spelling
5	Female	4	X			Reading/math
6	Female	5	X			Reading/math
7	Male	5		Unsure		Reading/writing
8	Female	5	X			Reading/language
9	Male	5	X			Math
10	Male	5	X			Reading/social studies
11	Female	5	X			Reading/spelling

The questions on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire are in both a closed and open format, to accomodate children who ranged in age from 8 years old to 11 years of age. Children may often have a definite feeling about something but may not have the vocabulary or ability to state the reasons why they may feel a certain way. The questionnaire gave the student the option of elaborating on an answer or simply answering the question by using the closed format.

The interview-questionnaire technique gave the writer as interviewer leeway to explain fully confusing questions to the younger student. There were opportunities for the student to ask questions for clarification. The student was encouraged to give the most complete answer possible to each of the questions.

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The interview ranged in time from 15 to 20 minutes depending on the responses that were given by each individual student. Time for the interviewer to write out the answers to the questions on the questionnaire form was included within the 15 to 20-minute time span.

Table 3 indicates that all borderline RSP students felt that before the practicum intervention, they were not receiving special help with their subjects, particularly the weak subjects. Item 18 on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire is: I receive extra help with my difficult subject(s). The students responded by stating YES or NO. All borderline RSP students answered negatively to having received extra help with weak subject areas, indicating that more service was needed for these students to increase their knowledge and awareness in the weak subject area or areas.

Table 3

Extra Help Survey on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire

(Before Practicum Intervention)

Sex of Student	Grade	Extra Help is Received for Weak Subject Area(s)	
		Negative	Positive
1. Male	3	X	
2. Male	3	X	
3. Male	3	X	
4. Male	4	X	
5. Female	4	X	
6. Female	5	X	
7. Male	5	X	
8. Female	5	X	
9. Male	5	X	
10. Female	5	X	
11. Male	5	X	

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Causative Analysis

It was the writer's belief that there were four causes for this problem:

1. Although prevailing state guidelines called for services for school-based RSP students (previously, borderline RSP students not legally identified), within the scope of the special education program, the school district did not encourage placement.

In order to receive special education funds from the state department of education, students must be legally placed RSP students. Funds are not received for school-based RSP students. School-based RSP students receive the same benefits, materials, and services as the officially staffed RSP student for up to one year. If however, the program has reached maximum capacity (28 students), and a newly staffed RSP student must be placed in the program, a school-based student must legally relinguish his or her position in special education to the officially staffed student. The district administration may want to help students that are needy but feel that it is not financially feasible, especially when money was taken from the general education fund in the district to help fund various special education classrooms.

2. Regular classroom teachers lacked time, knowledge, incentive, and skills to adequately help these borderline RSP students.

It takes more time to prepare for and teach an exceptional child than to teach children who have no learning handicaps. In addition to the extra time these children need, the regular classroom teacher also lacks the training and knowledge that is necessary for the students' academic and behavioral success at school (Moyce-Smith, 1988). This seems unfair for all concerned, the regular classroom educator, the parents, and the student. The regular classroom teacher many times feels overburdened for he/she often must function without adequate training and materials. This attitude may lead to a lack of incentive and even resentment towards teaching the exceptional student.

Many teachers at the school site in question had revealed frustration about teaching borderline RSP students. They found it difficult to accommodate these needy students and also to teach the other students adequately. Some of the teachers complained that they did not have the time to help the borderline RSP students. Many of the teachers asked the writer to supply materials and ideas to help the students in the regular classroom setting. Some of the teachers felt overburdened by the behavioral and academic difficulties the borderline RSP student exhibited. Some of the teachers preceived that they were not receiving enough help and therefore were losing the incentive to teach these students. Generally, the regular classroom teachers wanted

the students to learn and to be successful at school but felt that they, as professionals were not educationally prepared for the task.

3. Educators have only recently begun to explore other alternatives that could benefit these students within the regular classroom program.

With the advent of cooperative learning techniques, program modification, and regular classroom teachers becoming more aware of learning styles, change is just beginning to occur in some regular classrooms (Goldberg, 1989; Moyce-Smith, 1988; Slavin, 1989). More research and more rapid change needs to occur to accommodate the fast growing needy population that is prevalent in schools today.

Teachers at the school site in question were just beginning to use cooperative learning techniques in an effort to include the borderline RSP student in all classroom activites. Other methods such as peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring are beginning to be used, but the effort was not wide-spread throughout the school.

4. Educators had not investigated or developed a variety of alternatives to successfully help this population within the parameters of the special educational program in this district.

Students who do not qualify for the resource specialist program are legally excluded from the program and from any benefits that the program may offer (school district's

Procedural Guide). Even though teachers, parents, and school specialists may agree that a child needs special education help, special education services may not legally be administered.

Special educators have, in the past, worked only with those students that have officially qualified for a particular special education program. Legalities have been very precise about special education teachers working with the identified and staffed special education student (school district's procedural guide). Recently, however, under school-based provisions in the writer's state and within the structure of cooperative learning groups in the regular classrooms, resource specialists have been allowed to provide service to needy students, on a limited basis, who have not been officially staffed into the resource specialist program (school district's school-based coordinated program handbook). The resource specialist is also allowed to work within the regular classroom with a group of not more than eight regular and special education students. There must be at least one fully staffed special education student per small group within the regular classroom at the time the group convenes (school district's school-based coordinated program handbook).

Further research and wide-spread implementation of the program mentioned needs to be administered for today's rapidly growing needy public school population.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of current literature gives evidence of the need for extra help in regular and special education classrooms for the at-risk or borderline RSP student. Jackard (1988) reveals that students' self images improve through counseling and classes preparing them for life's problems and how to best cope with these dilemmas. The learning disabled child and borderline RSP student needs counseling to support his/her educational program (Gerber, 1986). Students can create solutions to difficulties with peers, parents, and teachers but borderline RSP students do not receive classes or counseling to cope with problems or to support the educational program at the writer's school site.

Some students have experienced many varied types of difficulties in and out of school and have not had opportunities to socialize and learn with students in the regular school program who, on the average, may not have had as many school and home related problems. Recent literature reveals that these students have not had an environment free of stigma (Friedel & Boers, 1989; Jackard, 1988; Lyons, 1989; Slavin, 1988).

Moyce-Smith (1988) discusses the lack of training and frustration of regular classroom teachers when faced with having to teach the mainstreamed learning disabled student

in the same environment as regular students. When handicapped students are mainstreamed for part of the school day, the regular classroom instructor needs to provide the appropriate modifications for these students (Lewis & Doorlag, 1987). The regular classroom teacher often does not know what modifications would be appropriate for the handicapped students.

Only students legally enrolled should receive the benefits of the special educator's expertise or direct service. This would generally exclude borderline RSP students that have not been staffed or school-based into the program from receiving help from the resource specialist. A legal exception is made when the resource specialist works within the regular classroom. Borderline RSP students can be grouped with staffed RSP students in the regular classroom and receive service from the resource specialist only during the scheduled group time and only if staffed RSP students are part of the same group.

Moyce-Smith (1988) also discusses regular classroom teachers of mainstreamed learning disabled students, needing to learn students' learning styles, and how to instruct the students accordingly. The resource specialist again cannot legally offer direction to regular educators, unless the student(s) in question have been staffed or school-based into RSP or are grouped with staffed RSP students in the regular classroom. Many RSP and school-based RSP students

have perceptual difficulties. Understanding the student's learning style would be essential in providing experiences that would enhance learning rather than hinder the process. Learning styles are often not considered unless the student is being screened for special education.

Stevens (1984) states that learning disabled students fail to succeed in learning the basic skills. Borderline RSP students have often been accused of failure to succeed in learning basic skills, as well. The resource specialist classroom teaching is an attempt to give special education services to students who need assistance with academics, perceptual difficulties, and/or behavioral problems in order to learn in the regular classroom (Cohen, 1982). Only students legally enrolled in the resource specialist program receive the benefits of special education and regular education.

Mainstreaming of exceptional students has become an important vehicle for helping to dispel some of the labeling associated with special education and to help normal and disabled persons learn how to function with each other. Clarkson (1982) writes her historical version of what mainstreaming means in the following statement:

> The enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142) mandates a national commitment to educate all handicapped children. The law has determined that handicapped children have the same rights as other children to receive an education according to their needs at public expense, and that public schools must change to

> accomodate this principle. This development is commonly known as mainstreaming. (p. vii)

This law does not mean that all exceptional students who have been placed in special education classrooms will return to the regular education classrooms. In fact, as Della Hughes, guest speaker for Nova University's Summer Institute 1991, stated, "You've got to respect the differences." She further explained that mainstreaming tended to lump everyone together, trying to make everyone fit the mold. She feels that students need different kinds of educational attention and that educators should look at these needs. Services should be accessible and appropriate for all young people however, borderline RSP students do not receive the needed extra help in regular or special education.

There has been confusion about what instructional programs work best for the borderline RSP student (Allington & McGill-Frazen, 1989; Kaiser, Palumbo, Bialozor, & McLaughlin, 1989; Lyons, 1989; Mercer & Denti, 1989; Shapiro, 1988; Slavin, 1988). Borderline RSP students may be exposed to various instructional programs, but when extra help is required there is no plan to assist these students.

At times borderline RSP students and staffed RSP students have a difficult time adjusting to school because of problems that affect the students' basic needs, such as obtaining adequate clothing, food, and/or nurturing (Dimidjian, 1989; Downs-Taylor & Landon, 1981; Friedel &

Chapter III

Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instrucments

Goals and Expectations

The goal of the writer was to intervene andto assist borderline RSP students in special education classes and/or through extra assistance within the regular classroom. Additionally, the writer wanted to demonstrate to the administration the value of RSP classes for the borderline RSP student.

Outcome Measures

1. Nine of the 11 borderline RSP students who have been school-based were projected to be positive about school in general and reading as a weak subject as reported on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire after intervention. A comparison will be made to previous negative attitudes indicated on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire completed before the school-based intervention.

2. After 3 months 9 of the 11 school-based borderline RSP students when interviewed on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire were projected to report that they received special help skills. Their perceptions of "receiving help" were projected to have changed after intervention.

3. At their respective grade levels, 9 of the 11 borderline RSP students, were projected to show fewer

academic deficits by receiving a passing score in the area of decoding, (phonetically sounding out words and blending them together), in reading and/or written language, as indicated by student work samples after intervention and as compared to similar work samples of the same students before intervention.

Measurement of Outcomes

1. The measurement of Objective 1, students' improved attitudes about school in general and about reading, was done by use of the Borderline RSP Questionnaire after all interventions had taken place. The Borderline RSP Questionnaire was used as a guide for interview questions. The questions were in both a closed and open format, to accommodate children who ranged in age from 8 years old to 11 years of age. (An example of the Borderline RSP Questionnaire is located in Appendix D.)

2. Before intervention responses about reading that were indicated by the student as being weak and requiring extra assistance, were compared to the responses made by the same students after the practicum intervention. The questionnaire was administered in the same way as described for Objective 1.

3. At their respective grade levels, 9 of the 11 borderline RSP students, will show fewer reading deficits and will receive a passing score (15 correct answers out of 20 possible answers) in the area of decoding (phonetically

sounding out letters and blending them together to say words), and as indicated by the student work samples of the same students before intervention. Before and after intervention work samples were similar in format. Third grade students will pronounce beginning and ending sounds of words on a teacher made work sample comprised of 20 words on a word list. Fourth and fifth grade borderline RSP students will pronounce each entire word on the same teacher made 20 word list. Work samples will be from the RSP classroom.

Chapter IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Possible solutions to helping elementary borderline RSP students were suggested by the literature. These included cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and direct instruction.

Cooperative Learning

The use of cooperative learning strategies is one suggestion (Friedel & Boers, 1989; Goldberg, 1989; Shapiro, 1988; Slavin, 1988). Cooperative learning strategies concentrate on the strengths and the development of the group towards a common purpose. The individuals who help comprise the group learn from and teach the other members of the group. Each person benefits from the group, as well as giving something to the group.

In recent years many researchers have focused on the success of cooperative learning techniques (Goldberg, 1989; Slavin, 1988). These techniques are adaptable in various types of classroom situations such as regular education classrooms and special education classrooms. Cooperative learning may take several different forms. One of the basic concepts of cooperative learning is that students learn to function as a team. Students learn to help each other so that their team develops and produces optimally. Teachers become facilitators of learning rather than mere lecturers.

Students are encouraged to think, question, and give creative answers to questions they are asked.

Cooperative learning research has emerged from the Center for Social Organization of Schools, Johns Hopkins University, the Cooperative Learning Center, University of Minnesota; and Group Investigation, devised by Sharan and Sharan in Israel (Goldberg, 1989).

There are various types of cooperative learning strategies. One type occurs when the teacher presents a lesson to the entire class and multi-level groups of five students work on work sheets or discuss topics together. The work sheets and discussion topics are related to or are follow-up work to the teacher's presentation. A representative from each group later summarizes the group's discussion and orally presents a consensus for the entire class to hear.

Another facet of cooperative learning is called jigsaw. In this arrangement every person in the group specializes in one area of a topic, and then meets and exchanges ideas with other experts (Goldberg, 1989). There are many variations of cooperative learning groups. In general, cooperative learning groups, in which heterogeneous students work toward a group goal, are an example of within-class grouping (Slavin, 1988). Within and between class groupings have been found to be effective in teaching skills and concepts (Goldberg; Slavin, 1988).

One negative feature about within-class grouping is that while the teacher is facilitating one group, the other groups of students in the class work without direct instruction. As a whole, however, current research acknowledges the merits of cooperative learning over many other traditional methods. Many of the students in both regular and special education programs have the opportunity to experience these groupings while participating in cooperative learning activities.

The principal idea of cooperative learning is assigning a group goal, and rewarding each member on the basis of the total product using a criteria-referenced evaluation system (Goldberg, 1989). The burden is on the group to produce and on the individual to help in that process by giving to the group the best of each member's abilities. In this way students will learn to grow with each other without stigma.

The literature advocates a learning environment free of stigma (Friedel & Boers, 1989; Jackard, 1988; Lyons, 1989; Slavin, 1988). Through the use of cooperative learning techniques and expanding on the idea of working as a group to gain a particular goal, students are viewed only as team members of a group. Generally, past stigmas are erased in lieu of working with these team members as agents also moving towards a common aim.

Peer Tutoring

Other important features of cooperative learning are peer tutoring (Friedel & Boers, 1989; Goldberg, 1989; Shapiro, 1988). Regular classroom teachers often feel that they can teach anything to anyone, providing they have the time (Jenkins & Jenkins, 1988). Students with special needs often need more repetitions and time than the teacher is able to give, unless it is at the expense of the other students assigned to the classroom. Peer tutoring and cross-age tutoring have been helpful to the teacher, the student tutee, and the tutor. Tutors and tutees may gain a better understanding of the subject matter and student attitudes toward the subject matter may be more positive (Fimian, Fafard, & Howell, 1984; Jenkins & Jenkins, 1988).

Another argument for peer tutoring is that it is less expensive than other forms of teaching or tutoring. The cost to train paraprofessionals and/or teachers, is much higher than to train peer and/or cross-age tutors (Jenkins & Jenkins, 1988). Peer and cross-age tutors can be very effective if given guidance and consistant teacher supervision with their tutoring. Tutors and tutees can learn from the tutoring experience. Tutors may learn empathy, patience and teaching skills. Tutees may learn the subject matter being tutored. Both may learn how to best work with each other in a learning partnership.

Direct Instruction

Many researchers attest to the merits of direct instruction for the low achiever (Gersten and Carnine, 1987; Hallahan and Kauffman, 1988; Kaiser & Palumbo, Bialozor, and McLaughlin, 1989). In fact, as mentioned earlier, the one negative draw-back of cooperative learning is that while the teacher is teaching one group, the other groups in the classroom must work independently without direct instruction in the within-class cooperative learning structure.

Direct instruction has been found to be an effective teaching technique for various types of students including the learning disabled (Gersten & Carnine, 1988; Hallahan & Kauffman, 1988; Lewis & Doorlag, 1987; Lloyd, 1988). Direct instruction is a step-by-step repetitive method of teaching such subjects as reading, (decoding and comprehension), spelling, and some mathematical processes. Fifteen years of research at the University of Oregon and Ohio State University has developed a highly structured, scripted plan with follow-up activities for direct instructional purposes (Gersten & Carnine; Hallahan & Kauffman; Lewis & Doorlag; Lloyd). Direct instruction helps strengthen the foundation of academic subjects such as reading, spelling, and writing. Direct instructional materials have been developed for teaching decoding skills, comprehension skills, spelling skills, and certain mathematical processes.

Direct instruction is an effective and sequential method of teaching phonetic or decoding skills. An important skill in learning how to read is phonological awareness (Sattler, 1988). In the teaching of decoding skills one uses visual as well as auditory stimuli. The student must learn to associate a letter directly with its sound, and letter combinations directly with their sounds (Young & Savage, 1982). When the student knows several consonant sounds and at least one or two vowel sounds he or she is ready for blending (Young & Savage, 1982). Blending requires that the student combine sounds to form words or syllables. Sounding out reading and/or spelling patterns should become automatic by repetition of the visual and articulatory sequences (Singer & Ruddell, 1985). With much practice the blending skills leads to automaticity, which is one important goal in learning to read.

Application to the RSP Student

The terms mainstreaming and resource room function together (Elmer & Ginsberg, 1981). A needy student who spends part of the day, less than 50 percent, in the resource room is also mainstreamed into the regular program for the remaining part of the day. One duty of the resource specialist is to assist the regular classroom teacher with the academic program for the identified RSP student who will be mainstreamed a portion of the school day within the regular classroom (Cohen, 1982; Dewey, 1980; Elman &

Ginsberg; Fairchild & Henson, 1976; Lewis & Doorlag, 1987; Wiederholt, Hammil, & Brown, 1978).

RSP and school-based RSP students should have access to an RSP classroom computer. The computer helps to enhance every subject and aspect of learning. Students should have access to software that helps to strengthen all areas of reading, language arts, and short term memory skills. The microcomputer allows the learner to 0communicate with it by anaylzing the learner's responses and reacting to those responses (Taber, 1983). The computer is a very good reinforcing tool. Information that is presented in class by the teacher may also be reinforced by the computer. RSP students and school-based RSP students may also be involved in the school-wide computer laboratory that functions as a part of the regular classroom's agenda.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

Working within the scope of both the mainstreaming philosophy and the philosophy that espouses special education programs, the writer understood the value of incorporating the two when working with the school-based borderline RSP student. Special education programs were set-up to help students adjust to the regular educational program at their own speed using their own style of learning. These programs continue to be necessary. Mainstreaming is also necessary when the student is ready to

assimilate into the regular classroom with the support services readily available to promote student growth and development. The writer worked within the two systems, special education and regular education, to unite the skills of both so that all children may have equal educational opportunity.

RSP and school-based RSP students spend less than 50 percent of their school day in the RSP classroom. Students work in the RSP classroom learning basic information pertaining to the IEP that has been designed for them. Direct instructional methods, particularly in teaching decoding or phonetic skills in reading and spelling, cooperative learning strategies, uses of CORE literature, computer work, and peer and/or cross-age tutoring were all part of the teaching within the resource room. Part-time resource room placement can produce substantial academic gains and improve the behavior of students (Topping, 1983).

In addition to collaborating with the regular classroom teachers, the resource specialist worked with parents and other persons involved with the school-based borderline RSP student. The students were reviewed by the SST. Regular classroom teachers, special educators, the site administrator, the referred student, the referring classroom teacher, medical and social service personnel, when required, and the parents worked together to supply possible solutions to the problems of the borderline RSP student, as

members of the SST. The resource specialist needs to acquire good interviewing and listening skills to help foster communication between the parent, the school, and special education (Downs-Taylor & Landon, 1981; Marion, 1981).

The writer's techniques for assisting the borderline RSP student, were concentrated in the areas of cooperative learning, drawing from the experiences of the students, using various hands-on activities, and using the direct instruction teaching method, particularly as it applied to decoding skills in reading and spelling. Such strategies as cross-age tutoring, peer tutoring, and working with partners helped to enhance learning for the school-based RSP students, as well as all student participants.

Borderline RSP students, who were the school-based RSP students, were audio and video taped, reading original stories, poems, and other written material. School-based RSP students and staffed RSP students wrote books, bound them, read them aloud to other students and the class, displayed them for Open House, and put a copy in the class library to be read by other students. School-based RSP students also contributed their original stories to the class story book.

School-based RSP students created read along tapes of stories they had written and that they had read on tape, for use in the RSP classroom on a check-out basis. School-based

RSP students took part in discussions inspired by enrichment presentations on various subjects; simulation activities, viewing video tapes, watching films, participating in assemblies, attending field trips, and other activities within the realm of both regular and special education.

In addition to cooperative learning groups and direct instruction within the regular and RSP classrooms, peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, and working with partners also added to the classrooms' structure.

Beginning with the SST, borderline RSP students who were not staffed into the resource specialist program may benefit from the program for the duration of one year under school-based provisions. The school-based students were treated no different from staffed RSP students. These borderline students received the same instruction, support, and other benefits provided by the resource specialist and RSP.

Additionally, all students were motivated towards school and obtained a more positive self esteem through their participation in contests. The following contests or areas in which students were encouraged but not forced to participate were: the 500 Club, Library Bookmarker Contest, The Carosel Poster Contest, and the Mom and Me Poster Contest. Borderline RSP students and staffed RSP students were motivated to participate in the contests. All of the

students were winners in at least one contest in which they received school-wide and/or community-wide recognition.

The following are school site monthly awards, which were also helpful for improving self esteem and more positive attitudes towards school and that were attainable by all students; Super Citizen Award, perfect attendance, various classroom awards for academic achievement, excellent study habits, and/or improvement in some area of school.

All school-based RSP students and staffed RSP students read, wrote, and/or performed original compositions for audiences of all types and for video taping. The students' writings were placed in the RSP classroom story book. Students' original books and audio tapes were displayed and used during Open House. These items were also placed in the RSP classroom library to be checked out by other students.

It has been documented that students receiving direct instruction in particular subject areas learn more than with other traditional approaches to learning (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Kaiser & Palumbo, Bialozor, & McLaughlin, 1989; Moyce-Smith, 1988; Shapiro, 1988). Direct instruction has been used nationally in regular education classrooms and in various special education classrooms as a viable instructional technique. The direct instructional method is useful as a strategy to teach decoding or phonics to beginning readers. Direct instructional procedures were

used in this practicum to teach decoding skills in reading and spelling.

Cooperative learning groups have proven to be an effective way of facilitating students, according to current literature (Friedel & Boers, 1989; Goldberg, 1989; Shapiro, 1988; and Slavin, 1988). Students of various functional levels in many academic areas have benefited educationally and have enjoyed this process of learning. Cooperative learning groups were especially important to the borderline RSP student in this practicum because he/she was able to learn a variety of subject matter with regular classroom students. By working in cooperative learning groups, borderline RSP students became a participative part of the regular classroom and therefore became more positive about school and about working with peers.

The borderline RSP students in this practicum needed more individualized attention from the teacher to absorb all the academic skills needed to compete on their grade level and later, in society. These students had similar learning and behavioral characteristics as staffed RSP students. To initially avoid the lengthy and arduous process of admittance into special education, students needing academic help were placed into the resource specialist program under school-based provisions for a maximum time period of one year. This school-based provision allowed the present structure to become more flexible.

It is the writer's professional belief that with the help of special education giving more individualized attention to the school-based student through direct instruction and cooperative learning techniques combined and with the efforts of regular education's use of cooperative learning, students benefited academically. Students' attitudes about themselves and about school have become more positive in the process. These methods, for the purposes of this practicum, have been an effective way of motivating students about learning as well as improving their knowledge and grades at school.

Report of Action Taken

The following is a summary of the action taken in implementing the strategies designed to accomplish the goals of the practicum.

The writer's proposal was approved for implementation by the principal of the school site, who was also the verifier for this practicum.

Past report cards, comments from the cumulative records, teacher comments, and work samples of the school-based borderline RSP students were studied by the writer. It was determined that all referred borderline RSP students had deficits in the areas of language arts.

The school-based RSP students were given direct instruction for decoding skill improvement, as well as general reading, spelling, and writing improvement. Direct

instruction was used four days a week throughout the intervention period. School-based RSP students consistently showed decoding skill progress and as a result seem to enjoy coming to class and being successful. Most of the students were eager to participate in the lessons.

Daily reinforcement of phonetic application through innovative activities in the areas of reading, writing, and oral language, was an important part of the RSP language arts program. Seemingly, the activities and reinforcement were more successful for the students individually and as a group, than the writer had previously anticipated. With the current adoption of the state's framework and the application of the whole language approach to reading, spelling, and writing, it is the individual teacher's prerogative whether phonics will be taught and if so, how it will be presented to students. Many of the borderline RSP students may not have been taught certain phonetic skills. Some of the borderline RSP students may have needed more practice on firming letter sounds and letter combination sounds.

One third grade student who had just started to phonetically decode words and to read, was so excited about his progress that he asked to be allowed to read to all of the RSP groups, 28 students altogether. The groups were assembled and the students were well behaved as they

listened to the student's reading. Everyone seemed to enjoy the success of this budding reader.

Borderline RSP students were able to concentrate on reading as well as other academic areas in small groups of not more than 8 students, outside of the regular classroom. Within the regular classroom, students were placed in cooperative learning groups, with peer tutors, or with partners to participate in learning activities. Borderline RSP students remained an integral part of the regular classroom during these activities. Every borderline RSP student was a working participant in their particular groups.

On occasions many of the borderline RSP students voluntarily took part in whole group discussions within the regular classroom after presentations given by the writer, who was also the facilitator in the classroom at the time.

In the RSP setting there were, small group discussions, whole class discussions where groups were combined, and frequent opportunities to give oral reports and demonstrations. These experiences may have helped to prepare the borderline RSP students for the discussions within the regular classroom environment.

The students were also familiar with the facilitator's personality and teaching style. These factors may have given borderline RSP students the confidence to interact capably in the larger setting. These students were

congratulated and praised in the RSP and regular classroom settings for their active participation. This praise may have stimulated some of their peers to also take part.

Books by Award Winning Student Authors

The resource specialist facilitated students working in their cooperative learning groups by using various enrichment activities. One such activity was the presentation of books by award winning student authors. These books were read out loud to all students. Later, each book was discussed with the students. These particular books were selected to encourage motivation for reading, writing, and school in general. These books served as excellent model books for the students. All students were taught step by step to write their own poems, stories, and eventually, books.

Following are the books that were selected for reading: The Legend of Sir Miguel, by Michael Cain, We Are A Thunderstorm, by Amity Gaige, Get That Goat, by Michael Ashenker, Elmer the Grump, by Elizabeth Haidle, and Walking is Wild, Weird, and Wacky, by Karen Kerber.

The students listened to information about the student authors' lives and about their interest in writing. The students seemed to enjoy the student authored books and frequently asked for more of such books to be read and to have repeat readings occur. Unfortunately, there was never enough time to have repeat readings.

Students were divided into cooperative learning groups to discuss their likes, dislikes, and various other aspects concerning the books. Later, one spokesperson reported to the general group on the smaller group's opinions.

Students were requested to think of possible topics for their own books. The cooperative learning groups stimulated discussion and ideas. Later, each student created his or her own book title from the topic expected to be covered in the student's perspective book.

All school-based RSP students created poems and short stories using a combination of writing with little instruction to a step by step method of teaching creative writing. The poems and stories were read to partners, read out loud before the RSP class, and students were video-taped reading their material. Volunteer RSP students read their written work before various regular classes. These poems and stories were displayed in the RSP classroom and later the writing became part of a classroom book.

School-based RSP students had been given several opportunities to listen to books and stories and to analyze the techniques and steps involved in writing a book before beginning their own books. Students enjoyed brainstorming many ideas for book topics while the resource specialist assisted by writing these thoughts on the chalk board.

School-based RSP students worked with partners and in groups to discuss possible book topics. Some of this work

had been done in the regular classroom setting, as well. The students wrote the first drafts of their books. Peer tutors, cross-aged tutors, the aide, and the resource specialist helped to edited this first copy. After several attempts at writing and rewriting the final draft was written, illustrations were completed, copies for the RSP classroom library were made, the covers were designed and laminated and the books were bound. The students were very proud of their accomplishment.

Later, students made read along tapes of their books. The books and tapes were displayed in the cafeteria for Open House. Several parents from other classrooms were interested in the tapes and books. Many were surprised that special education students had created such fine quality material. Several students read their books to other classrooms and all school-based RSP students read their books on video tape in the RSP classroom.

The Blind

The next enrichment unit of study was about the blind. A video about information on the blind, as demonstrated through the life of a young girl called Laurie, was shown to regular and school-based RSP students in the regular classroom. Tangible examples of Braille were displayed and used with the students. The Braille alphabet was used to decode a message written in Braille.

Regular students, staffed RSP students, and school-based RSP students worked with partners transcribing messages written in Braille. In the cooperative learning groups all students were able to read their messages aloud to a neighbor and to their particular group.

The resource specialist read a story about a young girl that had become blind. The students discussed the story as a whole group. The resource specialist asked questions to stimulate thinking about the positive aspects and inconveniences of blindness. Within groups of five students or less, students wrote all of the things that they knew about blindness. Many students knew a family member or neighbor who was blind. A chosen spokesperson shared his or her group's ideas with the entire class.

During the next class meeting students in their cooperative learning groups listed what they would like to know about blindness. A different spokesperson read his or her group's list to the class. The facilitator placed these interests on a large chart for the entire class to see. Many of the groups had common curiosities.

The list was available for the guest speaker, an itinerant teacher of the blind. She shared her knowledge about various aspects of blindness and her valuable experience working with blind students. She displayed several types of devices used to assist the blind; the Braille typing machine, Braille books, canes for the blind,

pictures that depicted safety awareness for the blind, and pictures of various animals that assist the blind. Borderline RSP and regular students asked many questions of the speaker. All students delighted in handling the devices the speaker brought to share with the class.

At a later date the resource specialist had the students work with partners to simulate being blind. The students took turns being blind by using a blindfold and being the assistant to the blind person by helping them maneuver around the classroom. In cooperative learning groups the students discussed how they felt in the two roles.

After a review of the unit about the blind, the students were asked to separate into cooperative learning groups and discuss what they had learned about blindness. As a group, students wrote what they had learned on a large chart. Students compared the three lists, stating what they already knew about blindness, what they wanted to know, and what they had learned about blindness. Each cooperative learning group's chart was shared and compared with the entire class.

The students determined whether their individual questions had all been answered by the subject matter presented. Some questions had not been answered such as, Are there ways of preventing some blindnesses and if so, how? Students were encouraged to do research on unanswered

questions and report back to the class if they were able to find answers to their questions.

The underlying theme of all the units on disabilities was that blindness, deafness, or physical handicaps are inconveniences and that people are adaptable and possess many more capabilities than disabilities. The students seemed to be very involved and interested in the activities about the blind unit, as well as the other units. Often outside of class, regular and borderline RSP students would come up to the writer to ask questions about blindness or to tell the writer about some incident they experienced centering around the topic. School-based RSP students seemed to enjoy being a viable part of the group activities. They did not seem inhibited about participating in the activities.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The next enrichment unit dealt with the deaf and hard of hearing. The resource specialist read two stories within the regular classroom about children that need to use hearing aids and that are deaf. Students discussed the books separately in cooperative learning groups using a list of questions to prompt discussion.

A video was shown to regular and school-based RSP classrooms about a student that is deaf. He explained in the video the difficulties he faced as well as his thoughts and feelings about living in a hearing world.

Several simulation activities were facilitated by the resource specialist. The students listened to taped recordings of unclear speech, soft speech, and muffled speech. Students tried to determine what was being said. Later, the speech was made audible and clear so that the students were able to hear what was really said. In groups and with partners the students' feelings about not being able to hear clearly were discussed. The ideas gleened from the cooperative learning groups were discussed as a class.

A presentation by an itinerant teacher of the deaf was given to the RSP classroom. She included in her presentation, diagrams of the anatomy of the ear, demonstrations of American Sign Language, charts showing the function of the ear, and several aids used by the deaf and hard of hearing. Students were instructed on how to sign for various items. As each student signed for a cookie, each student received a cookie to eat, making the presentation a delicious experience.

Within the regular and RSP classrooms, all students were placed in cooperative learning groups to answer a list of questions that related to what they had learned about deafness and aids for the hard of hearing.

The resource specialist presented to the regular classroom more information about the ear and its functions. The resource specialist shared her experiences gained while touring Galludet University in Washington, D.C. The

facilitator taught the students the Pledge of Allegiance in sign language. One student signed The Happy Birthday Song. Other students demonstrated various words and gestures in sign language. Students worked with partners to decode each other's messages by using gesture signing work sheets and the American sign language alphabet sheet.

An RSP student demonstrated the use of his hearing aids and with the consent of his parents, was allowed to discuss his hearing difficulty and answer questions from the students. This was a positive learning experience for all of the students. This hard of hearing student has a strong self concept and seemed to enjoy being an authority and answering questions. The other students were fascinated with the hearing aids and were allowed to handle the aids. Two students were allowed to use the aids briefly.

Periodically, school-based RSP students were video-taped reading or dramatizing their written work. Students presented book reports orally, in skit form by using puppets and other props, and in written summary form.

The Physically Handicapped

In the unit on the physically handicapped, regular and school-based students were presented with a story and video about the physically handicapped. Students worked in cooperative learning groups using aids such as crutches, wheel chairs, bandages, splints, canes, helmets, neck

braces, and the use of their imaginations to simulate various types of physical handicaps.

Students who volunteered to be spokespersons, reported back to the entire classroom about the students' reactions. Students commented about their negative and positive feelings after having simulated various physical handicaps.

All students took part in a class discussion about personal physical handicaps that some students had experienced themselves or that friends or family may have encountered. Students mentioned problems such as broken arms, broken fingers, sprained ankles, a blind cousin, a frail grandmother, and an uncle confined to a wheelchair.

Students each wrote about a particular handicap. The students were requested to write about all the things that a person with the handicap could accomplish. Students listed aids that are available to help with their chosen handicap.

Dolls depicting various physical handicaps and aids to help with the handicap helped to motivate the students that found it difficult to chose a handicap or to relate to physical problems. Students manipulated the dolls by removing and replacing such aids as glasses, crutches, canes, helmets, splints, and hearing aids. The dolls also depicted various racial groups, they had a variety of hair and eye colors, and both sexes were represented.

Magazine articles, newspaper articles, and advertisements featuring physically handicapped people, were

shared with the students. Most of the articles revealed how the physically handicapped can be productive citizens despite their physical inconvenience. Examples of blind musicians, skiers with one leg, wheel chair basket ball and tennis players, and famous celebrities that overcame their weaknesses and excelled by the use of their strengths were presented to the students and discussed. Students wanted to contribute their knowledge of famous people with disabilities; a baseball player that has one arm, a singer and piano player that is blind, and a famous anchor woman that has a hand disorder.

The school-based RSP students were post-tested using the Decoding Word List and other work samples. Students were post interviewed by using the Borderline RSP Questionnaire. Results were tallied and compared with the results of pre test scores and answers on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire.

Scheduling an acceptable time for the enrichment units' activities in the regular classrooms was difficult in the beginning of the intervention. Working around the two-hour language arts time period in the morning, recesses, the writer's RSP schedule, and the Spring musical rehearsals in the afternoon, was a challenge. Even though the schedule had to be changed many times, no class periods were ever skipped, therefore, implementation of the practicum was not adversely affected.

Chapter V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The goal of this practicum was to intervene and assist borderline RSP students in special education classesby providing extra assistance within the regular classroom. Additionally, the writer wanted to demonstrate to the administration the value of RSP classes for the borderline RSP student.

Outcome Measure 1: Nine of the 11 borderline RSP students who have been school-based will be positive about school in general and positive about reading as a weak subject as reported on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire after intervention. Scores will be compared to previous negative attitudes indicated on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire completed before the school-based intervention.

As indicated in Table 4, all 11 borderline RSP students who were school-based, were positive about school in general as reported on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire after intervention.

Table 4

Subject and School Attitudes of Borderline Students on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire (After Practicum Intervention)

	Sex of Student	Grade	Attitude about School in General: Negative	Attitude about School in General: Positive	Student Choice of improved area(s)
1	Male	3		X	math
2	Male	3		X	math
3	Male	3		X	math
4	Male	4		X	reading
5	Female	4		X	reading /spelling
6	Female	5		X	spelling
7	Male	5		X	reading
8	Female	5		X	math
9	Male	5		X	reading/writing
10	Male	5		X	math/reading
11	Female	5		X	math

Before intervention, 10 of the 11 students indicated negative attitudes about school in general. Ten of the 11 students also chose reading as a weak subject area. After intervention, however, every student had generally positive things to say about school, and 6 of the 11 students chose reading or closely related subjects such as spelling and writing, as subject areas that were improved.

Although not all of the apprehensions or negative conceptions about school were dispelled in this 3-month intervention period, the students were able to cultivate a generally positive attitude about school. Such comments from students as: I read better, School is fun, School is

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easier, and I'm learning to catch up, are interpreted by the writer as positive attitudes about school. The writer believes that these attitudes are directly related to the extra RSP service and the cooperative learning in the regular classroom that was provided during the intervention period of the practicum. Success and a good feeling of one's self develops out of success experienced in reading and writing with no fear of failure (Friedel & Boers, 1989).

Outcome Measure 2: After 3 months 9 of the 11 school-based borderline RSP students when interviewed on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire will report that they received special help in developing reading skills. Their perceptions of "receiving help" will have changed after intervention.

All borderline RSP students when interviewed on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire reported that they received special help skills. The borderline RSP students unanimously felt that they had received help from the RSP service and the peer tutors used in both the regular and RSP classrooms. It was apparent from responses to the Borderline RSP Questionnaire, that the students felt the resource specialist and the aide were readily available for assistance with reading and other academic and emotional difficulties. Table 5 presents the after intervention

responses of the borderline RSP students concerning extra help received for help with weak subject areas.

Table 5.

Extra Help Survey on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire

(After Practicum Intervention)

Sex of Student	Grade	Extra Help is Received for Weak Subject Area(s)		
		Negative	Positive	Comments
1. Male	3		X	I like being in RSP.
2. Male	3		X	I've improved because I listen.
3. Male	3		X	School is easier. I'm learning more.
4. Male	4		X	I read better. I like RSP.
5. Female	4		X	I feel better about school.
6. Female	5		X	It's fun. My grades are better.
7. Male	5		X	I can read faster and better.
8. Female	5		X	I'm better in school, RSP helps.
9. Male	5		X	I turn in my book reports now.
10. Female	5		X	I like the teachers.
11. Male	5		X	I'm learning to catch up.

Outcome Measure 3: At their respective grade levels, 9 of the 11 borderline RSP students will show fewer academic deficits by receiving a passing score in the area of decoding, (phonetically sounding out words and blending them together), in reading and/or written language, as indicated by student work samples after intervention when compared to similar work samples of the same students before intervention.

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Nine of the 11 borderline RSP students showed fewer academic deficits by receiving a passing score in the area of decoding, (phonetically sounding out words and blending them together), in reading and/or written language, as indicated by student work samples after intervention and as compared to similar work samples of the same students before intervention. (Table 6 presents borderline RSP student work sample results, completed after practicum intervention).

Table 6

Borderline RSP Student Work Sample Results (After Practicum)

Sex of Student	Grade	Initial and Ending Sounds Pronounced (3rd grade) Correct Responses			Entire Word Decoded Aloud Correct Responses	
		Pre Score	Post Score	Pre +/-	Pre Score	Post Score
1 Male	3	6	8	-	0	10
2 Male	3	6	3	-	0	13
3 Male	3	7	6	-	0	11
4 Male	4			-	8	15
5 Female	4			-	5	14
6 Female	4			-	10	18
7 Male	5			-	9	15
8 Female	5			-	13	18
9 Male	5			-	7	11
10 Female	5			-	8	16
11 Male	5			-	9	18

*Minimum passing score for third, fourth, and fifth graders is 15 correct answers out of 20 possible items.

Although 9 of the 11 borderline RSP students showed fewer academic deficits by receiving a passing score in the area of decoding in reading, all students made progress in

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this area. All students showed fewer academic deficits after intervention although the scores of two of the student participants were not passing scores according to the writer's criteria. There were students in the third grade who surpassed the minimal passing standards for sounding out beginning and ending sounds of words and for reading entire words.

The Borderline RSP Questionnaire was used as a guide for the interview questions. The students were able to answer the questions in both closed and open formats, depending on the student's age and ability to elaborate on an answer. Although comments varied from question to question and from student to student, all students responded to the majority of the questions after intervention. The students may have felt more comfortable about elaborating on their answers after having become familiar with the writer who was also the interviewer. Students may have become more accustomed to and experienced about communicating, since this aspect of learning was utilized in the RSP classroom and in the cooperative learning groups in the regular classroom.

One example of the borderline RSP students' open communication was their willingness to reveal personal occupational choices and favorite subjects after practicum intervention. Two students indicated the professions of principal and teacher as favorite future occupations. These

professions are directly related to the school. These choices of occupations may be considered examples of positive attitudes about school. Other occupations mentioned call for many hours and sometimes years of schooling and training, such as, policeman, pet store owner, doctor, nurse, secretary, professional baseball player, and body builder. These professions may also indicate a healthy and positive attitude about school. (Table 7 presents after intervention subject, school, and occupational preferences of borderline students on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire.)

Borderline RSP students also listed their favorite subject or subjects. Four of the 11 students chose reading or related subjects, such as spelling and writing as their favorite choices. Three months previously, before the practicum intervention, three of these four students had listed reading, spelling, and/or writing as their weakest subject. Weak subjects are rarely considered as possible choices for favorite subjects. Perhaps these students had been able to succeed in language arts during the intervention period and their feelings were not as negative about the subject matter. Perhaps the subject matter was presented in a more meaningful way and the areas of concern were no longer considered unexciting. Perhaps a combination of student success and interest helped to broaden these students' perceptions and feelings for language arts.

Table 7

Subject, School, and Occupational Preferences of Borderline Students on the Borderline RSP Questionnaire (After Practicum Intervention)

Sex of Student	Grade	Occupational Choice of the Student	Student's Choice of Favorite Subject(s)
Male	3	Truck driver or Policeman	Writing
Male	3	Body builder	Tether ball, kick ball, tag
Male	3	Principal	Math, writing
Male	4	Pet Store Owner	Math, science
Female	4	Doctor	Spelling
Female	5	Nurse	Math, reading, spelling
Male	5	Baseball Player for the Dodgers	Recess
Female	5	Teacher or secretary	Recess and lunch
Male	5	Doctor	Math
Male	5	Professional Baseball Player	Physical Education
Female	5	Veterinarian	Math

Credit must be given to the teachers and students who willingly cooperated, were flexible with time changes, and worked diligently to help make all three outcomes of this practicum successful.

Discussion

The improvements in the borderline RSP students' decoding skills, attitudes about school and reading, and feelings about whether they have received special academic

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help, relates directly to the practicum intervention. The writer will share these results with the administration and will point out that without the help of RSP, the borderline RSP students would probably not have improved attitudinally and academically. Some advantages to pull-out programs, such as RSP, are minimal distractions, intense and structured instruction, and an individualized curriculum with a focus on students' strengths and weaknesses (Meyers, Gelzheiser, Yelich, & Gallagher, 1990).

There is a strong need for administrative support. It is virtually impossible to implement an effective classwide, schoolwide or district wide program aimed at preventing future academic failure without the backing of principals, directors of curriculum, and superintendents (Shapiro, 1988). The results of this practicum intervention should help the district administration to feel more confident about the school-based provision for servicing borderline RSP students.

Through the use of direct instruction for phonetic development in the RSP classroom, borderline RSP students acquired some of the skills necessary for decoding words. These skills are instrumental in the process of learning to read. By utilizing a variety of activities involving peer tutoring and cooperative learning experiences, students have gained various academic and social skills, ultimately necessary in most occupations today. RSP services have

given the borderline RSP students the assurance and confidence of knowing that extra help and support was available.

The writer is convinced that the combination of these learning and teaching components is vital to the education of the borderline RSP student, whose needs have been often forgotten by the use of more traditional teaching styles. The nonexceptional student benefits as well. Students learn many things from one another. A sense of belonging is necessary for building self esteem which will, in turn, produce the desire for knowledge (Friedel & Boers, 1989).

Sometimes information is more easily obtained from a peer than from an adult. When students work together and create together, the process is at least as important as the product. Friedel and Boers (1989) state that success in reading and writing programs combined with a cross age peer education program would be effective in combating academic deficiencies.

There were unforeseen benefits that resulted from this practicum. In some elementary school environments, special education teachers and classrooms are separated from the rest of the school. Although at this particular school site the special education class and teacher are not isolated, there had been a feeling of separation from a few regular teachers on staff. Even before the practicum intervention the resource specialist had been very involved with the

school, in general, but because the RSP curriculum, the teaching style, and the student population are in some ways different than in the regular classroom setting, there had been a vague feeling of isolation toward the discipline of special education among some regular classroom teachers. These regular teachers seemed to feel intimidated to have the resource specialist in "their" classrooms. Throughout the implementation of this practicum, the resource specialist was drawn much closer to the regular classroom experience. The resource specialist gained knowledge and valuable experience that helped to connect her with the regular teachers and students.

Additionally, the regular teachers involved in the practicum and the resource specialist, developed a camaraderie between them. The resource specialist was viewed as a partner or co-worker, rather than as an overseer or threat to the regular classroom teacher's style of teaching. The writer believes that the regular teachers involved in the practicum intervention no longer feel intimidated by the resource specialist, rather, an attitude of welcome beckons the resource specialist to enter and help service the teachers and students. This congenial atmosphere helped the students to learn in the best possible environment during the practicum experience. The resource specialist must be an effective consultant and should see

herself/himself as a helping teacher working as a team with the regular teachers (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1988).

Throughout the implementation period, borderline RSP students and regular classroom students learned the meaning of being disabled through simulation and other activities, working together with peers towards a common goal, creating books and stories by reading and writing, and experiencing learning by using various modalities. The activities and presentations were seemingly enjoyable and academically beneficial for all students involved. The resource specialist was frequently asked by students to visit the regular classrooms more often than was originally scheduled.

Recommendations

The following are offered:

1. In the regular classrooms where cooperative learning lessons were administered and a variety of presentations were delivered by the resource specialist, progress was seen in academic achievement, social skills, and borderline RSP students' attitudes about school and reading. Although the regular classroom teachers were positive about this technique, it is recommended that it be broadened to affect many more classrooms and students.

2. It is recommended that an enrichment and tutoring program be implemented at this school site, as well as other school sites in the district experiencing similiar dilemmas.

Groups of at-risk students could meet before and/or after school hours. Special education students and those who may not qualify for the special education programs would receive academic support and enrichment opportunities. Teachers, aides, parents, cross-age tutors, peer tutors, high school volunteers, college intern teachers, members of the community, and local businesses could be instrumental in providing these extra services for the students who are in need of them. The writer will be helping to coordinate such a tutorial program for all needy students during the next school year.

3. Another recommendation is that the regular classroom teacher consistently hold conferences with the parent(s) of the referred student prior to the SST meeting. At the conference, the teacher and parent(s) will decide on various alternative plans to help remedy the student's difficulty. If after having tried the plan(s) unsuccessfully, scheduling the SST meeting would be the next step. SST students would have been prescreened and alternatives tried therefore, moving the process along so that students who qualify for the service would receive it earlier.

4. Finally, even though all activities and strategies that were discussed in the proposal for this practicum were completed, the schedule for each class meeting was too full. One recommendation would be to spread the activities out

over a longer period of time so that the students and teachers would have more time to reflect on the learning experience. The writer believes that students would have more time for questioning or spontaneous activities stimulated by the lessons.

Dissemination

RSP is currently in a period of transition from the traditional pull-out program to integrating the RSP into the regular classrooms that house officially staffed RSP students. Currently, there are variations in how the resource specialist functions at each school site. Many resource specialists are confused about their role. There is also confusion about how to adapt the regular classroom's program to the needs of RSP students. The writer will submit an article to the special education newspaper, describing this practicum and the results. The article will offer alternatives and modifications to the role of the resource specialist.

The writer will submit another article to the union paper, reaching regular classroom teachers who are interested in RSP support for the regular program. Regular and special educators may wish to duplicate the practicum procedure or to borrow ideas that may be adapted to their particular school site.

The successful outcomes of this practicum have been shared with the administrator at the local school setting. Local school personnel may also be interested in this practicum as the school site develops cooperative learning techniques and collaboration with professional personnel. The practicum intervention procedure will also be reimplemented during the next school term with some modifications.

Finally, an abstract of the report will be provided to each cluster member.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SPECIAL EDUCATION TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Definition of Terms

Resource Specialist and Resource Specialist Program - R.S.P.

The resource specialist provides services for the children that have been identified and that have qualified by a complete battery of exams given by the school psychologist for the resource specialist program, R.S.P. The students being served are enrolled in the regular classroom and are seen by the specially trained teacher for a length of time and at a frequency determined by the severity of their particular problems. The resource specialist continually assesses the needs of the children and their teachers and usually teaches students individually or in small groups in a special classroom where special materials and equipment are available. The resource specialist also serves as a consultant and assistant to the regular classroom teacher, advising on instruction and management of the child in the classroom and by demonstrating instructional procedures and techniques. (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1989).

Student Study Team - S.S.T.

The S.S.T. is a group of professionals and parents that examine the needs of referred studenrs at a particular school site. This team offers support, assistance, and ideas that help the referred student to receive what is necessary for his education. The core team is composed of the principal, two regular classroom teachers, one regular education resource teacher, a regular education parent, the referring teacher, the parents of the referred regular education student and the regular education student. Often other members of the staff and community may be invited to attend the meetings, such members may

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be: the resource specialist, a bi-lingual resource, reading specialist, math specialist, program specialist, special day class teacher, speech and language specialist, school psychologist, nurse, adapted physical education teacher, etc.

After at least two S.S.T. meetings, a group decision to place the referred student in the R.S.Program can be made after careful consideration of current preliminary exams, observations, various regular education modifications have been unsuccessfully attempted, and physical and medical reasons have been eliminated as causes for the academic and/or behavioral difficulties. (Hacienda La Puente Unified School District Procedural Guide, 1989).

School-Based Coordinated Program

Borderline R.S.P. students that have had at least two S.S.T. meetings can be legally school-based into the R.S.Program for one year until the required testing for possible placement has been completed by the school psychologist and the resource specialist. If after the full battery of exams is given and the student does in fact qualify for the resource specialist program, steps will be taken to initiate a special education staffing, so that the student will be an official R.S.P. student. If after the complete battery of tests is given and the student does not qualify for special education, steps will be taken to help this student within the parameters of the regular education program. (Hacienda La Puente Unified School District Procedural Guide, 1989).

Borderline Resource Specialist Program Students - B.R.S.P.

These students exhibit many of the same characteristics as identified and staffed R.S.P. students. The differences between the borderline R.S.P. students and the staffed R.S.P. students

are; (1.) The borderline R.S.P. students have not yet been given the full battery of tests by the psychologist and, (2.) Since all of these exams have not yet been given, the psychologist will not be able to make a decision as to whether the borderline R.S.P. student qualifies for the resource specialist program. Borderline R.S.P. students or possible R.S.P.students may be considered for and accepted as school-based R.S.P. students. The term, Borderline R.S.P. Students, is a term that the writer has coined for students that are recognized as having the mentioned characteristics.

Public Law 94-142

An act of the U.S. Congress, entitled "The Education of All Handicapped Children Act," was signed into law November 29, 1975, by President Gerald Ford. This act mandates the availability of special education for children and youth requiring such education (Mahan & Mahan, 1981, p. 216).

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL-BASED COORDINATED PROGRAM AND CALIFORNIA LAWS
FORMS USED AT SCHOOL SITE

SCHOOL BASED COORDINATED PROGRAM

The School Based Coordinated Program (SBCP) is designed to allow schools to coordinate the personnel, materials, etc. in various state program in ways to meet their own unique needs. At the SBCP was approved by the School Site Council to provide integrated services from the following programs:

-SB 65 - Allow for five student release days to provide for staff development.

-Sept. 10 - To provide district and school level inservice on implementation of the school plan
-Nov 9 - All teachers will attend the Reading Association Conference in
-Jan 18 - will combine with other schools to provide a workshop on teaching higher level thinking skills in various curricular areas.
-Mar 8 - This date is being held open pending staff evaluation of its needs
-May 24 - Staff will evaluate school program plan for 1990-91 and prioritize needs for 1991-92

- The School Based Coordinated Program has allowed our RSP teacher to service students who have needs, but might not otherwise qualify for Special Education. The following procedure is followed in placing these children:
  - Referral to Student Study Team
  - Meeting of Student Study Team with recommendation approved by all members, including the parent
  - Not to exceed the legal caseload number for RSP teacher.

SB65 Will also allow for the services of the RSP teacher at to work with students who are not identified as special education participants. These students are referred by the Student Study Team for additional help by the RSP teacher. Total number of RSP and SB65 students cannot exceed state maximum for the RSP teacher.

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Special Education Participation

Services of the Resource Specialist Program and Designated Instructional Services (DIS), such as Speech/Language, Adapted P E , and counseling may be provided to pupils who have not been identified as Individuals with Exceptional Needs (IWENS), provided that all identified IWENS are being appropriately served

The Resource Specialists' caseload may not exceed 28, the legal maximum case load for a Resource Specialist teacher This includes both identified and non-identified students

Providing services to non-identified students has both program and financial considerations for the District

Financial

Special Education funding is provided by a system of Individual Personnel Services Units (IPSU's), that is a teacher, aide, and support money In order to maintain an IPSU, a RSP teacher must carry at least 22 identified students of the caseload To qualify for growth, there needs to be a minimum of 24 students on the caseload Less than 22 students results in the loss of an IPSU and the support money for the unit This is approximately $49,361 per unit and approximately $24,977 for support, a substantial amount of revenue for the District.

Program

Each student in Special Education has an individual education program designed to remediate the academic delays caused by his/her handicapping condition. The Resource Specialist Program is designed to be remedial rather than tutorial

If a school site wishes to have special education participate in SBCP, a plan is required to be written and approved Following are some guidelines to help facilitate such a plan

- Students being considered for services by the RSP teacher should receive some type of academic screening to determine if their needs are similar to those of the identified students.
- The Student Study Team or Guidance Team, of which the parent is a participant, is the vehicle for placement of the student who needs special help.
- Time limits, not to exceed a year, should be determined, stipulating the amount of time a student will be placed before a formal assessment is conducted to determine eligibility for Special Education services

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Legal maximum of Special Education are carefully observed (no more than 28 students on teacher's workload) Efforts should be made to maintain a caseload of at least 24 identified students whenever possible (Only identified students can be counted for fiscal caseloads All students are counted for maximum number of students allowed)

- A maximum of eight students in an instructional setting should be maintained

- The school site plan should include who is responsible for student outcomes (grades, report cards)

- Parents should be informed and give consent for placement with the RSP teacher, prior to such services being provided (see attached form)

- Parents must clearly understand that their student is not an identified Special Education student (Non-identified students and parents do not share the same procedural rights as those identified)

STUDENT STUDY TEAM REFERRAL

School: _____

Date: _____

_____
Name of Student

_____ _____ _____
Teacher's Name Subject Grade

ACADEMIC	LOW				HIGH	NO KNOWLEDGE
ACADEMIC ABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	_____
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	1	2	3	4	5	_____
WORK HABITS	1	2	3	4	5	_____
PERFORMANCE						
READING	1	2	3	4	5	_____
MATH	1	2	3	4	5	_____
WRITTEN SKILLS	1	2	3	4	5	_____
BEHAVIORAL						
MOTIVATION	1	2	3	4	5	_____
ASSERTIVENESS	1	2	3	4	5	_____
MATURITY LEVEL	1	2	3	4	5	_____
INTERACTION	1	2	3	4	5	_____
INTEREST IN SCHOOL	1	2	3	4	5	_____
PHYSICAL HEALTH	POOR				GOOD	
HEARING	1	2	3	4	5	_____
EYE SIGHT	1	2	3	4	5	_____
EYE-HAND COORDINATION	1	2	3	4	5	_____
GENERAL HEALTH	1	2	3	4	5	_____
GROOMING/CLEANLINESS	1	2	3	4	5	_____

	POOR				GOOD	NO KNOWLEDGE
SOCIAL						
FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS	1	2	3	4	5	____
PEER RELATIONSHIPS	1	2	3	4	5	____
STUDENT/TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS	1	2	3	4	5	____
GENERAL						
IRREGULAR OR POOR ATTENDANCE	1	2	3	4	5	____
OFTEN TARDY TO CLASS	1	2	3	4	5	____
OFTEN UNPREPARED FOR CLASS	1	2	3	4	5	____
OFTEN DOES NOT BRING MATERIALS	1	2	3	4	5	____

Indicate below any explanation or amplification of your observations. of the student.

Dear

We will be holding a Student Study Team (SST) meeting on at for your child . The request for the Student Study Team was made by your child's teacher. The SST consists of the parent, teacher and other school staff members. It is the goal of the SST to look for ways the school and home can work together to help the child be successful at school.

It is very important that a parent attend the Student Study Team meeting. Please call the school at to verify that you will be able to attend the date and time scheduled above.

Thank you for your support in this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Principal

Estimados Padres,

Vamos a tener una reunion de SST relacionado a su niño(a), _____, en la fecha _____. La petición fue hecha por la maestra (o maestro) de su niño(a). El grupo SST consiste del padre, el maestro o maestra y otro personal docente de la escuela. El proposito del SST es para encontrar maneras como ayudar a su niño(a) a tener exito en la escuela, con la cooperación del hogar y la escuela.

Es muy importante que los papás asistan a esta reunión. Favor de llamar la escuela al número para verificar si Ud. podria asistir al lugar y tiempo indicado arriba.

Muchas gracias por su apoyo en este asunto muy importante.

Sinceremente,

Director

Resource Specialist Program

One outcome of the Student Study Team plan to assist students with demonstrated academic needs is placement with an existing instructional group within the Resource Specialist Program at the local school. The student is not considered part of the Special Education program but may receive instruction as an auxiliary member of the group. This alternative depends upon space available and must not deprive qualified Special Education students from service.

- No more than a total of twenty-eight students may be served by the RSP teacher
- Instructional groups may contain no more than eight students

****

Recommendation for placement of as an auxiliary participant in an instructional group(s) of the Resource Specialist Program at _____ School has been made by the Student Study Team on this

_____ of _____. _____
(day) (month) (year)

Student Study Team, Members:

_____ Regular Teacher

_____ Principal

_____ RSP Teacher

_____ Parent

_____ Psychologist

_____ Other

****

I agree to have my child_____, be included in the Resource Specialist Program as an auxiliary member of an existing instructional group(s). I understand that my child has not been identified as a special education student. The child is being assisted under the School-Based Coordinated Program guidelines.

_____ _____
(Parent signature) (Date)

Dear Mr. and Mrs. _____,

_____ has received the services of the resource specialist program for nearly one year. He/she has not yet been qualified for the special education program. I would like you to be aware that your child's final service day is _____.

If you would like R.S.P. services to be extended to the last day of the school year, please sign below.

If you would like to have your child continue the services of the resource specialist program under the school-based provisions for an extension of six months, please sign below.

It has been a pleasure for me to work with your child. I wish him/her much success in the future. Please call me at Palm School if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Resource Specialist

I would like R.S.P. services to be extended to at Elementary School.

Parent Signature _____ _____

APPENDIX C

DECODING WORD LIST WORK SAMPLE

NAME_____

DECODING WORD LIST

	Initial Sound	Medial Sound	Ending Sound	Word
1. GRASS				
2. BETTER				
3. HAPPEN				
4. LUNCH				
5. SHEEP				
6. FOOD				
7. STATION				
8. PERFORM				
9. EXCUSE				
10. STONE				
11. PRICE				
12. DISTANT				
13. REGION				
14. JUNGLE				
15. MERCHANT				
16. FELT				
17. CLIFF				
18. BIG				
19. BULK				
20. JUMP				

APPENDIX D

BORDERLINE RSP QUESTIONNAIRE

Grade:_____

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
BORDERLINE R.S.P. QUESTIONNAIRE

1. At school, I really like_____
2. The things I like most away from school are_____
3. I need more help with these subjects:
   a._____
   b._____
4. If I could change one thing about school, I would _____
   _____
5. I learn best when_____
6. Away from school, I am best at_____
7. The subjects I do well in at school are:
   a._____
   b._____
8. When I do things right, I like to do or get_____
   _____
9. When I grow up, I would like to be a_____
10. I like coming to the resource room because_____
    _____
11. I do not like coming to the resource room because_____
    _____
12. I feel good about myself at school when_____
    _____
13. I have or have not improved academically since receiving help from the resource room and why_____
14. I have or have not improved my classroom behavior by coming to the resource room and why_____

15. I do or do not enjoy my resource teacher teaching in my regular classroom and the reasons why_____

_____

16. I feel better or worse about school since receiving help in the resource room_____

Why?_____

17. I do or do not want to continue working in the resource room_____

Why?_____

18. I receive extra help with my difficult subject(s)_____

19. I do or do not like school and why_____